

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PRESTON, MINNESOTA

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PREPARED BY:

WSB

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Project Background	1
1.2	Purpose and Need	1
2	ALTERNATIVES	3
2.1	Development of Alternatives	3
2.2	Alternatives Retained For Detailed Analysis	3
3	AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ALTERNATIVES	4
3.1	Aesthetics	4
3.2	Land Use	5
3.3	Air Quality	5
3.4	Cultural Resources	6
3.5	Geology and Soils	7
3.6	Hydrology and Water Quality	8
3.7	Wildlife and Habitat	9
3.8	Noise	11
3.9	Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management	12
3.10	Socioeconomics	13
3.11	Community Services	14
3.12	Solid and Hazardous Materials	14
3.13	Transportation and Parking	15
3.14	Utilities	16
3.15	Environmental Justice	17
3.16	Cumulative Impacts	17
3.17	Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy	20
4	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	21
5	MITIGATION	22
6	LIST OF PREPARERS	25
7	REFERENCES CITED	26
8	LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	27

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Figures

Figure 1 – Project Location

Figure 2 – Proposed Action Layout

Figure 3 – Zoning

Figure 4 – Areas of Prime Farmland

Figure 5 – Water Resources

Figure 6 – Sanitary Service Areas

Appendix B – Agency Correspondence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This draft environmental assessment (EA) identifies, analyzes, and documents the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with new construction of a State Veterans Home in Preston, MN. The Proposed Action would involve the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) awarding a grant to the State of Minnesota to partially fund the construction of the Veterans Home facility and infrastructure. This proposed project would cover approximately 10 acres in NE ¼ of Section 36, Township 103N, Range 11W in the City of Preston, Fillmore County, Minnesota (**Figure 1**). The new 54-bed home will be approximately 68,000 square feet consisting of three 18-bed households and center core for facility operations and administration areas. Each household contains single occupancy resident rooms, kitchen, dining room, living room, den, nursing area, spa and bathing, and staff support.

The purpose of this Proposed Action is to continue to enable the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) to provide eligible Veterans and their families with a home atmosphere that is comfortable, inviting and encourages well-being. The philosophy of the design emphasizes strong connections to nature and a simplicity of form to create tranquil settings for meaningful life.

The Proposed Action is needed to meet the MDVA's mission of providing eligible Veterans with high quality long-term care. The potential for environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and No Action alternative are summarized in **Table 1**, below.

Table 1: Summary of Impact Analysis

Resource	Proposed Action	No Action
Meets Purpose and Need	Yes	No
Aesthetics	Temporary impacts during construction. No long-term adverse impact	None
Land Use	No adverse impact	None
Air Quality	Particulate emissions during construction are below the de minimis threshold level. Emissions would comply with all permit requirements and regulations. No significant adverse impact.	None
Cultural Resources	No adverse impact.	None
Geology and Soils	Temporary increase in potential for erosion during construction. No significant adverse impact.	None
Hydrology and Water Quality	During construction: Potential for construction runoff to impact surface water quality. During operation: Increase in impervious will increase runoff. No significant adverse impact.	None
Wildlife and Habitat	Short-term disturbances from construction would result in temporary displacement of wildlife. No significant adverse impact.	None
Noise	During construction: temporary increase in noise is expected.	None

	<p>During operation: Noise levels are not expected to exceed state thresholds.</p> <p>No significant adverse impact.</p>	
Floodplains and Wetlands	No adverse impact.	None
Socioeconomics	<p>Possible short-term localized beneficial impact to employment during construction as well as a positive workforce development and employment opportunities following completion.</p> <p>No significant adverse impact.</p>	None
Community Services	Beneficial impact by providing nursing care services for Veterans and their families.	None
Solid and Hazardous Waste	<p>Solid waste generated during construction and operation would be typical of similarly sized projects and residential facilities. Would comply with all regulations.</p> <p>No significant adverse impact.</p>	None
Transportation and Parking	<p>During construction: short-term impacts from construction access.</p> <p>During operation: Access will be provided from Windmill Road. 75 parking stalls will be constructed. Traffic generation expected to be minimal.</p> <p>No significant adverse impact.</p>	None
Utilities	No adverse impact.	None
Environmental Justice	No adverse impact.	None
Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy	None	None

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is dedicated to serving Veterans and their families by assisting them in securing state and federal benefits, and by providing programs and services related to higher education, benefits, burial, claims, outreach, and Veterans preference.

MDVA also operates five Veterans Homes throughout the state, providing a continuum of long-term care for its residents with a strong emphasis on remembering and recognizing the service and sacrifices of all Veterans. The MDVA partners with various veteran organizations, including county, public, and private Veterans services.

The MDVA applied for a grant to fund construction of a new Veterans Home in Preston, MN (**Figure 1**). The Proposed Action involves the US VA awarding a grant to partially fund the construction of the Veterans Home facility and infrastructure. The project would be located on a 16.6-acre parcel of land to the southeast of the intersection of State Hwy 16 and Golfview Dr and would include the construction of a 54-bed, 68,000 square foot State Veterans Home with skilled nursing care and a center core for facility operations and administration areas.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this Proposed Action is to continue to enable the MDVA to provide eligible Veterans and their families in Minnesota with a home atmosphere that is comfortable, inviting and encourages well-being. The philosophy of the design emphasizes strong connections to nature and a simplicity of form to create tranquil settings for meaningful life. The Proposed Action is needed to meet the MDVA's mission of providing eligible Veterans with high quality long-term care.

This EA has been prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with VA's proposed grant to support the MDVA's construction of a new State Veterans Home in Preston, MN.

The VA and MDVA are required to incorporate environmental considerations into their decision-making processes for the actions they propose to undertake. This site-specific analysis is conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code 4321 et seq.), the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) "Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA" (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500–1508), VA's NEPA regulations titled "Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions" (38 CFR Part 26), and VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010). These requirements specify that VA must evaluate the potential environmental impacts of VA facilities, operations, and related funding decisions prior to taking action. The MDVA must apply the NEPA review process and use the information to make an informed decision prior to undertaking a proposed action. An EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether an action would cause significant environmental impacts (requiring an EIS) or the agency can issue a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) (40 CFR 1508.9). A FONSI is a decision document that briefly presents the reasons why an action would not have a significant effect on human environment (40 CFR 1508.13). As required by NEPA and the implementing regulations from CEQ and VA, the alternative of taking no action is evaluated, providing a baseline for comparison of potential impacts from the action alternative(s).

This EA:

- Informs the public of the possible environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and its considered alternatives, as well as methods to reduce these effects,
- Provides for public, state, inter-agency, and tribal input into MDVA's planning and evaluation,
- Documents the NEPA process,

- Supports informed decision-making by MDVA.

The decision document for this proposed state undertaking also identifies the actions to which MDVA, as a condition of grant award, would commit to minimize environmental effects, as required under NEPA, its implementing regulations from CEQ (40 CFR 1500–1508) and VA (38 CFR Part 26), and VA's NEPA guidance (VA 2010).

The decision to be made is whether, having considered the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects, VA should implement the Proposed Action of grant award including, as appropriate, measures MDVA would implement to reduce adverse effects.

2 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Development of Alternatives

The new construction evaluated under the Proposed Action are within the boundary of the property evaluated in the 2019 Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. Working with an architecture-engineering consultant, MDVS considered options within the boundary areas for layout of the site elements, identifying an efficient design that complements the existing aesthetics of the area. The option of not building the project was also considered (No Action alternative).

The criteria required to accomplish the Proposed Action includes the construction of a 68,000 gross square foot, 1-level and partial basement Home located in Preston, MN. Access to the site would be provided from Windmill Road and utilities will be provided from existing utilities nearby.

2.2 Alternatives Retained For Detailed Analysis

The Proposed Action involves the VA awarding the federal grant which will allow construction of the VA Home within the identified location in Preston, Minnesota. The Proposed Action would meet the purpose and need of the project by providing eligible Veterans and their families in Minnesota with a home atmosphere that is comfortable, inviting and that encourages well-being. The proposed Home would provide long-term care to Veterans in this area. The proposed action (**Figure 2**) would include:

- A 54-bed State Veterans Home that would be 68,000 square feet of three 18-bed “households” and a center core for facility operations and administration areas.
- Each “household” would support 18 private rooms (each with a full private bathroom), kitchen, dining room, living room, den, nursing area, spa & bathing, and staff support.
- An access road would be constructed from Windmill Road.
- The site would be landscaped in keeping with the overall appearance, for visual aesthetics and to provide sound attenuation.

The No Action alternative includes the VA not awarding the federal grant. As a result, construction of the new VA Home would not proceed. This alternative would not provide eligible Veterans with quality long-term care in Preston, MN. It would negatively impact Veterans and their families in the southeast Minnesota region and would result in this population being underserved in the future. Without the Home, Veterans would need to be cared for in private nursing homes or go without needed nursing care and services. For these reasons, the No Action alternative would create hardships for the families and Veterans and would not meet the purpose and need for the action.

3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the environmental conditions at and adjacent to the proposed project area and the potential impacts that would occur because of the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative. The existing conditions provide a baseline for analyzing potential impacts. The analysis considers direct, indirect, temporary, long-term, adverse, or beneficial impacts. Where applicable, best management practices and mitigation measures that would minimize or eliminate adverse impacts are identified.

3.1 Aesthetics

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The proposed facility area is on a relatively flat area on top of a hill near Preston, Minnesota. The area is currently in use as cultivated cropland surrounded by wooded area on approximately 10 acres of the 16.6-acre parcel. The elevation at the top of the hill is 1,180 ft while surrounding roadways to the north, east, and west are at approximately 1,080 ft. The roadway to the south is Windmill Rd that extends uphill to the same elevation as the proposed facility area and allows access further to the south on Overlook Dr to a small housing development. The site is bounded on the north side by Bluff Country Ct followed by State Hwy 16. The west and east are bounded by wooded area followed by an agricultural field and Golfview Dr to the west and commercial buildings followed by US Hwy 52 to the east. Due to the elevation and surrounding woodland of the proposed facility area, it is not easily visible from roadways to the north, east or west. The project area is visible to the residents of the single-family housing community and motorists or pedestrians using Windmill Rd and Overlook Dr to the south of the project site.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

Construction of the Proposed Action would occur within an area that is currently undeveloped and disturbed annually for agriculture. Construction would involve use of heavy grading equipment as well as heavy equipment for the initial building construction. The use of these types of equipment will impact the aesthetics of the area, but the impacts will be temporary. The overall construction of the project is expected to be completed within 16 months. The use of heavy equipment is expected primarily at the beginning of that 16-month construction schedule, and construction-related visual impacts will be minor near the end.

The aesthetics of the building itself, once constructed, will resemble other single-story residential facilities in the area as opposed to commercial or institutional (e.g., hospital) facilities. Courtyard and garden areas will be interspersed with the structural elements (buildings, trails, parking areas) and are intended to bring more visual appeal to the project. Construction of the Proposed Action will result in a long-term change in the aesthetics of the area when compared to the existing undeveloped agricultural field. Aesthetics are objective, so some may find the changes appealing while others may find them adverse. When considering the surrounding land uses and existing developments, the use will be similar to the surrounding setting. Overall, the new Veterans Home is not expected to create a significant adverse impact to the aesthetics of the area.

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the Veterans Home would not be built in this area. The area would continue to be used for agricultural uses into at least the short term but would likely develop in the future due to its proximity to the City of Preston.

3.2 Land Use

3.2.1 *Affected Environment*

The project area consists of approximately 16.6 acres of undeveloped land owned by the City of Preston. The existing land use is approximately 10 acres of cultivated cropland surrounded by 6.6 acres of woodland and is zoned R-2 – one and two family residential. The property is located approximately one mile from the main street in the City of Preston. Nearby land uses include an area zoned for I-1 - Industrial to the north and north east of the project site and an area zoned R1 – Agricultural/Residential to the southeast of the project site. Zoning is shown on **Figure 3**. A golf course is located less than 0.5 miles to the west of the project site. North and northwest of the project site are commercial businesses that include a farm equipment supplier and a farm and dairy. Directly adjacent to the south of the project is a single-family housing development.

3.2.2 *Environmental Consequences*

Proposed Action

Construction of the Proposed Action would occur within an area that is currently undeveloped and disturbed annually for agriculture that encompasses approximately 10 acres of the project parcel. The project would construct a Veterans Home which is allowed as a permitted conditional use under the zoning regulations for R2 – one and two family residential. The City of Preston would donate the land to the State of Minnesota. Construction activities would temporarily impact the site. There would be no adverse impacts to the land use or zoning from the Proposed Action.

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the Veterans Home would not be built in this area. The area would continue to be used for agricultural uses into at least the short term but would likely develop in the future due to its proximity to the City of Preston.

3.3 Air Quality

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) define the maximum allowable concentrations of pollutants that may be reached but not exceeded within a given time period to protect human health with a reasonable margin of safety. The ambient standards are for the criteria pollutants of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, lead, particulate matter (PM), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). Particulate matter is further defined by size – less than 10 micrometers in diameter (PM₁₀) and less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM_{2.5}). While ozone is a regulated pollutant, it is not emitted directly from sources but is formed by a combination of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) reacting with sunlight in the atmosphere. Exceeding any of the NAAQS constitutes nonattainment of the standard in the area. A federally enforceable state implementation plan (SIP) is required for areas of nonattainment, and an EPA-approved maintenance plan is required when an area is reclassified from nonattainment to attainment.

3.3.1 *Affected Environment*

The project area is within an attainment area for all criteria pollutants; therefore, General Conformity (40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B) analysis is not needed. No air emissions permits are currently held for the site. The current land use is agricultural and likely produces fugitive dust during certain times of the year.

3.3.2 *Environmental Consequences*

Proposed Action

Construction of the Proposed Action would produce dust and particulate emissions during the grading and construction stages. Construction contractors would be required to minimize exhaust

emissions by maintaining equipment in accordance with state and federal regulations. Dust on the site would be minimized by using control measures such as water application, utilizing rock construction entrances, street sweeping frequently on roadways adjacent to the construction site. Fuel combustion in construction vehicles would temporarily result in increased emissions of VOCs, NOx, SO2, PM2.5 and CO. The construction contractor would implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as use of compressed natural gas as fuel and minimizing idling of construction and delivery vehicles to the extent practicable to minimize impacts. Construction workers would use privately owned vehicles to travel to and from the project site during the construction, which would also result in temporary emissions. Construction activities at the project site would not significantly adversely affect air quality.

During operation of the Veterans Home stationary air emissions will occur as the result of use of heating and cooling (HVAC) units and refrigeration units, transport, treatment, and storage of solid waste and wastewater produced onsite, and vehicle emissions.

Neither construction or operation of the facility is expected to exceed the state or federal thresholds for requiring an Air Quality permit. Potential air quality impacts would be minimized by implementing the requirements for protection of air resources including compliance with federal and state air quality regulations and standards, and control of particulate matter, carbon monoxide emissions, and odors and complying with the emission limitations, operating limitations, and other requirements detailed in 40 CFR 63 Subpart ZZZZ (§63.6605). Other air quality impact minimization measures exist and may be considered, including:

1. Use energy efficient building materials that reduce needs for home heating and cooling.
2. Install energy star appliances and programable thermostats (already assumed).
3. Install smart irrigation, or no irrigation at all, to reduce outdoor water use.
4. Utilize the city's recycling program and compost site for organic solid waste to reduce the burden on and future methane emissions from local solid waste landfills.

Overall, both short- and long-term air quality impacts from both construction and operation of the Proposed Action are not expected to be significant.

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the Veterans Home would not be built in this area. Air quality would not be affected. The land would continue under agricultural use for at least the short term, which may produce dust during certain times of the year. The site would likely develop in the future, which would impact air quality in ways similar to the Proposed Action.

3.4 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include both archaeological resources and historic above-ground resources. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (Public Law 89-665; U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.) as amended, outlines Federal policy to protect historic properties and promote historic preservation in cooperation with States, Tribal governments, local governments, the public and other consulting parties. The NHPA established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and designated the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as the entity responsible for administering State-level programs in the state of Minnesota. Section 106 of the NHPA outlines the procedures that Federal agencies follow to consider the effect of their actions on historic properties. The Section 106 process applies to a Federal undertaking that has the potential to affect historic properties, defined in the NHPA as those properties (i.e., archaeological sites, buildings, structures, historic districts, and objects) that are listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP.

3.4.1 Affected Environment

The project's Area of Potential Effect (APE) consists of approximately 10 acres of agricultural land surrounded by approximately 6 acres woodland in the NE ¼ of Section 36, Township 103N, Range 11W in Preston, Fillmore County, Minnesota. Areas within approximately 0.5 mile of the APE contain buildings which have been built within the last approximately 20-25 years.

Under the 2019 authorization allowing grant recipients to initiate Section 106 consultation on VA's behalf, MDVA consulted with SHPO on the proposed undertaking. SHPO recommended that a Phase I archaeological survey be completed prior to construction. MDVA completed a Phase I survey, which supported the finding that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed undertaking. SHPO concurred with this determination.

To meet its Tribal Consultation responsibilities, VA consulted with federally-recognized tribes with interests in the project area. VA received responses from the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the Lower Sioux Indian Community and is currently continuing this consultation.

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of the Veterans Home and would include grading and excavation. Based on the Phase I survey, no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project. Correspondence from SHPO is included in **Appendix B**. If during construction cultural resources are discovered construction would halt and the SHPO and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe would be consulted.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home in this area. The No Action alternative would not impact cultural resources, though the site would likely develop in the future which would require grading and excavation in ways similar to the Proposed Action. The SHPO indicated that no historic properties are present in the vicinity of the project and that the likelihood of intact archaeological resources is low.

3.5 Geology and Soils

Geology and soils include the physical surface and subsurface features and landforms of the project site. The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) (7 USC §4201 et seq.) states that Federal agencies must "minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses..." (NRCS 2013). Resources protected by the FPPA include prime farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland but can also be pastureland, forestland, other lands. Water and urban built areas are not protected by FPPA. Additionally, according to the FPPA, farmland does not include land that is already in or committed to urban development (NRCS 2013). The definition of farmland already in urban development includes lands identified as "urbanized areas" on the U.S. Census Urban Area Reference Maps.

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The project area consists of approximately 10 acres of cultivated agricultural land surrounded by woodland. The area to be developed is generally flat at an elevation of 1,180 feet with surrounding roadways to the north, east, and west at approximately 1,060 feet. Soils within the project area are characterized as Fayette silt loam with 2 to 6 percent slopes. Soils are designated as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance (**Figure 4**).

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed for the site and no recognized environmental conditions were identified within or adjacent to the project area. The likelihood of contaminated soils on the site is minimal.

3.5.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of the Veterans Home and would include grading and excavation. These activities would expose soils to wind and water erosion creating minor, short-term, erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction. Wind erosion could temporarily increase dust in the area, resulting in short-term health, visibility, and aesthetic impacts. Surface water erosion could increase the risk of sedimentation in stormwater. These potential impacts will be minimized by implementing erosion control best management practices (BMPs) in conformance with the NPDES permit requirements. The project would disturb more than 1 acre of soil, so an NPDES permit will be required. The project would develop a site-specific erosion control plan that would include installing silt fence around the perimeter of the construction site, inlet protection at catch basins and manholes, rock construction entrances to minimize tracking of soil offsite, erosion control blanket, concrete washout facilities, and both temporary and permanent revegetation plans. Site topography would not be substantially altered. Drainage changes resulting from changes to site topography are anticipated to be minimal and would be monitored for erosion potential through routine site stormwater management practices. Excavated soils will either be reused on site or hauled offsite and would be managed in accordance with federal, local, and state rules. Based on the results of the Phase I ESA it is unlikely that contaminated soils exist on the site. If contaminated materials are discovered during construction activities, work would cease until the appropriate procedures could be implemented. The NRCS has been consulted regarding the conversion of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance (**Appendix B**).

During operation of the Veterans Home the project area would either be developed or vegetated. No exposed soils would be present following construction and vegetation establishment. Construction of the Proposed Action would not adversely impact the geology or soils.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home in this area. The No Action alternative would not immediately impact the soils at the site, although soils would remain exposed during portions of the year, resulting in an increased risk of wind and water erosion. The site would likely develop in the future which would require grading and development in ways similar to the Proposed Action and would ultimately remove the site from use as farmland.

3.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

Hydrology addresses surface and stormwater drainage patterns. Water quality addresses the control of stormwater runoff to protect the quality of receiving waters, and the presence and quality of groundwater. The CWA (33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq.), as amended in 1977, established the basic framework for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States (WOUS). The CWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (33 U.S.C. §1342) requires permits for stormwater discharges associated with construction activities. Regulations require erosion, sediment control, and stormwater management plans, coverage under the General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction activities, and preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is the governing unit for the stormwater management practices and requires permanent stormwater management to meet their requirements if the amount of disturbed area will be 1 acre or more. The MPCA stormwater management rule needs to meet the standards for rate control, water quality, and volume control.

3.6.1 *Affected Environment*

The project area consists of approximately 10 acres of cultivated cropland land on the top of a hill surrounded by woodland. The area to be developed is generally flat at an elevation of 1,180 feet with surrounding roadways to the north, east, and west at approximately 1,060 feet. Surface water runoff generally flows from the site to the north, west and east as the proposed project area is on the top of a hill. Runoff then flows south towards the South Branch Root River. A geotechnical boring completed for the project did not encounter water in any of the borings during exploration, but elevated moisture levels were measured in the upper loessial clay samples. Groundwater levels would be expected to fluctuate seasonally with local weather patterns and similar to water levels in nearby streams and rivers.

Surface waters near the project area include the South Branch Root River located approximately 0.5 miles south, two freshwater ponds approximately 0.5 miles west and one freshwater pond to the north east of the project site (**Figure 5**). The South Branch Root River is listed on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agencies list of impaired waters as impaired for Aquatic Life due to elevated levels of E. Coli and Nitrates.

3.6.2 *Environmental Consequences*

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of the Veterans Home and would include grading and excavation which would expose soils to surface water runoff and could temporarily impact water quality. Potential impacts would be minimized by incorporating erosion and sediment control BMPs and implementing a SWPPP. The project would disturb more than 1 acre of soil, so an NPDES permit would be required. The project would increase impervious surface within the project area and would meet the MPCA's rate control, water quality, and volume control requirements as outlined below:

- Rate Control – Proposed runoff shall not exceed existing 5.66 cubic feet per second for the 100-yr 24-hour storm event.
- Water Quality – 80% capture of total suspended solids would be required.
- Volume Control – 1-inch abstracted from the impervious areas on site.

If dewatering is necessary during construction, the contractor would be responsible for implementing a dewatering plan and obtaining necessary permits from the DNR if the dewatering exceeds 10,000 gallons per day.

During operation of the facility, two new wet detention ponds constructed on the southwest portion of the facility area would manage all site stormwater. The pond would have a skimmer overflow directed to the south west to maintain existing drainage patterns. The Proposed Action is not expected to adversely impact hydrology or water quality.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home in this area. The No Action alternative would not immediately impact the hydrology or water quality at the site, although soils would remain exposed during portions of the year, resulting in an increased risk of sedimentation in surface water runoff which could impact water quality. The site would likely develop in the future which would result in impacts to hydrology and water quality in ways similar to the Proposed Action.

3.7 **Wildlife and Habitat**

The Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 USC 1531-1544) provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals and their habitats. Under Section 7 of the ESA, all Federal agencies, in consultation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service, are required to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitats. Minnesota DNR's Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program collects, manages, and interprets information about the state's nongame animals, native plants, and plant communities to promote the wise stewardship of these resources. The MN DNR is responsible for managing and conserving the state's animal species.

3.7.1 Affected Environment

The project area is in the Paleozoic Plateau Section ecoregion, which is characterized by bluffs and valleys underlain by flat-lying sedimentary rocks. Native vegetation consists of tallgrass prairie and bur oak savanna. Within the project area, approximately 10 acres has been converted to agricultural cropland surrounded by wooded area that contains bur oak. The surrounding properties do not provide connections to large tracts of contiguous woodland. No wetlands exist within the project area.

Wildlife likely to utilize the project area would be those accustomed to frequent disturbance and open fields such as white-tail deer, raccoons, rabbits and woodland species including fox, coyote, and fishers. Birds would include a mixture of open habitat species including migratory grassland and songbird species. Some raptors, including bald eagles, waterfowl, and shorebirds may also use the project area occasionally. Many of these species are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Bald eagles are protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

According to the DNR NHIS database (License Agreement No. 1003) there are no state-listed threatened or endangered species within the project area. The following rare species have the potential to be impacted by this project:

- Rusty-patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) – Two listings of sightings located 1,000 feet north of the project site. The project site is located within the low-potential zone for the rusty-patched bumble bee.

According to the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) data viewer, the following federally-listed species may be located within Fillmore County.

- Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) – a federally-listed threatened bat species. During the summer, the bat roosts alone or in colonies under loose bark, in cavities, or crevices of both live and dead trees as well as within caves and mines. During the winter, the bats hibernate within caves and mines. The Minnesota DNR maintains a map of known maternity roosts and hibernacula. The project area does not contain any known maternity roosts or hibernacula.
- Leedy's Roseroot (*Rhodiola integrifolia* spp. *Leedyi*) – a federally-listed threatened plant species. Leedy's Roseroot requires a specialized habitat, including shallow ledges on north-facing dolomite cliffs up to 98 feet in height, which does not exist in the project area.

3.7.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of a Veterans Home within the project area and would change the environment from an agricultural field surrounded by woodland to a developed area including impervious surfaces, vegetated areas, and stormwater pond surrounded by woodland. Tree trimming and minor tree removal is expected to occur at the edge of the cultivated field. Short-term disturbances from construction would result in temporary displacement of wildlife, though given the use of the site as an agricultural field wildlife are likely already displaced regularly through farming activities.

Following construction, establishment of non-native vegetation or invasive species is unlikely because turf, landscaped areas, and paved or impervious surfaces will be installed across the

project area. Wildlife typical of the area in the existing condition would likely return to the project area following construction as they are accustomed to disturbed areas. The stormwater ponding area and surrounding buffer may also provide habitat for species, such as waterfowl, that do not currently occupy the site. The following determinations were made regarding the effect that the project will have on threatened or endangered species.

- Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) – a federally-listed threatened bat species. The IPaC determination key was used to determine that the project may affect this species but will not adversely affect this species if tree clearing and grubbing is performed between August 1 and May 31 (inclusive), outside of the maternity season. The ‘may affect’ determination letter is attached in **Appendix B**.
- Leedy’s Roseroot – this species requires a specialized habitat which does not exist within the project area. The project will have ‘no effect’ on Leedy’s Roseroot.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not build the Veterans Home within the project area and there would be no impacts to wildlife or habitat. The project area would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term but would likely develop in the future and ultimately impact wildlife and habitat in ways similar to the Proposed Action.

3.8 Noise

The Noise Control Act of 1972 (42 USC 4901 et seq.) directs Federal agencies to comply with applicable Federal, State, interstate, and local noise control regulations. Noise is considered any undesirable sound that interferes with normal activities or otherwise diminishes the quality of the environment. It may be intermittent or continuous, steady or impulsive, stationary or transient.

In 1981, the EPA concluded that noise issues were best handled at the State and local level. In Minnesota, the MPCA is responsible for enforcement of the noise regulations. Minnesota’s primary noise limits are set by noise area classifications (NACs) based on the land use at the location of the person that hears the noise. They are also based on the sound level in decibels (dBA) over ten percent (L₁₀), or six minutes, and fifty percent (L₅₀), or thirty minutes, of an hour. These rules are outlined below:

NAC	Common Land Use	Daytime		Nighttime	
		L ₁₀	L ₅₀	L ₁₀	L ₅₀
1	Residential, Religious Activities, Hospitals, Schools, Camping and Picnicking Areas	65	60	55	50
2	Retail, Business, Government, Recreational Transit Passenger	70	65	70	65
3	Manufacturing, Fairgrounds and Amusement Parks, Agricultural and Forest Activities.	80	75	80	75

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates noise impacts on workers with limits to ensure that workers are not exposed to an 8-hour, time-weighted average of 90 dBA or noise levels for any duration higher than 115 dBA. Exposure to impulsive or impact noise (i.e., loud, short duration sounds) is not to exceed 140 dB peak unweighted sound pressure level.

3.8.1 Affected Environment

The project area consists of approximately 10 acres of agricultural land surrounded by approximately 6.6 acres of woodland. Land use to the east of project area is commercial/industrial with a farm supply store and restaurant. The area south of the project site is a small residential neighborhood. The area to the west is cropland followed by a roadway and the area north of the project site is a roadway followed by agricultural and industrial mix. Noise Area Classifications for the project area fall into NAC 1.

The most common form of noise currently occurring at the project site includes vehicular traffic and occasional noise from farm equipment. Other sources of noise from adjacent properties includes sounds such as those from heating and ventilation systems, landscape maintenance (mowing), and other general maintenance activities. None of these sources produce noise that would be defined as excessive.

3.8.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of the Veterans Home which would increase ambient noise in the areas surrounding the site. Increases in noise levels would occur from the operation of heavy equipment (such as bulldozers, backhoes, etc.) and haul/dump/concrete trucks. Noise associated with different construction phases can vary greatly depending on the equipment being used; most construction heavy equipment (bulldozers, dump trucks, excavators) operate at a noise level of 80-90 dBA; however, noise levels depend on type and model of equipment, the operation being performed, condition of the equipment, and length of time the equipment is operated. Noise levels from construction sites measured approximately 90 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the center of a site (CERL 1978). Sites in flat-lying areas with minimal vegetation experience noise attenuation at a rate of 6 dBA for each doubling of distance (100, 200, 400, 800 feet) between the noise source and the receptor (CERL 1978). A receptor located between 400 and 800 feet from the center of a construction site could hear intermittent construction noise levels between 72 and 66 dBA (with no attenuation), which are comparable levels to heavy traffic at 300 feet, a commercial bus area, or a lawn mower at 100 feet. The intermittent increase in noise would likely be an annoyance but would not exceed typical noise thresholds; thus, impacts would not be significant. The daily commute of construction workers and deliveries of construction materials to the project site would also add to traffic noise in the area. To mitigate construction-related noise impacts:

- Construction activities would take place during normal business hours to the maximum extent practicable;
- Equipment and machinery used at the project site would meet all local, State, and Federal noise regulations; and
- Personnel exposed to noise levels exceeding OSHA limits from heavy equipment during construction would be required to wear appropriate hearing protection and practice safety BMPs in accordance with OSHA regulations.

During operation of the facility, noise levels would be reduced when compared to construction noise. Sources of noise would include those caused by HVAC systems and normal maintenance of the property (e.g., mowing, snow removal, etc.). Noise levels are not expected to exceed the state standards and therefore significant noise impacts are not expected.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not build the Veterans Home within the project area and there would be no noise-related impacts. The project area would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term but would likely develop in the future and ultimately cause noise impacts in ways similar to the Proposed Action.

3.9 Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management

Water resources are protected by a variety of regulations in the United States. Executive Order 11988 requires Federal agencies to avoid actions that adversely impact floodplains where there is a practicable alternative, and to minimize harm when avoidance is not feasible. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) uses Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) to identify the 100-year regulatory floodplain for the National Flood Insurance Program. Executive Order 11990 requires Federal agencies to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands. The Clean Water Act (CWA) protects the surface waters

of the nation through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and through Section 404. Under the NPDES program, no point source (pipe, facility, etc.) can discharge into a WOUS without an NPDES permit. The EPA has authorized the State of Minnesota to administer the NPDES program. Section 404 of the CWA establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Activities in waters of the United States regulated under this program include fill for, among other things, development projects. The US Army Corps of Engineers oversees the Section 404 permit program.

3.9.1 Affected Environment

The project area is located with an area mapped by FEMA as Zone X, which represent areas of minimal flood hazard (**Figure 5**). The MN DNR's National Wetland Inventory did not identify any wetlands within the project area. The NRCS's Web Soil Survey maps most of the project area soils as having predominantly non-hydric soils.

The project is not located within a Coastal Zone Management Area.

3.9.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would not adversely impact regulated floodplains or wetlands, because none exist within the project area.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home within the project area, and it would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term. It is likely that the project area would develop in a manner similar to the Proposed Action in the future, though no adverse impacts to floodplain or wetland would occur because those features do not exist in the area.

3.10 Socioeconomics

The socioeconomic environment includes demographics, employment and income, and housing. The environmental health risks and safety risks to children were also considered, as required by EO 13045 Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks.

3.10.1 Affected Environment

The existing site is located on 10 acres of agricultural cropland on the top of a hill surrounded by approximately 6.6 acres of woodland. The population of Preston as of the 2010 Census was 1,325. Demographics of the project area include less than 2% persons of color, 65% low income, and 44% having less than a high school education.

3.10.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of the Veterans Home. In the short-term, construction activities would make a slight contribution to the local economy through the possible use of local construction materials and supplies as well as use of local businesses by construction employees.

During operation, the Veterans Home would likely provide a few long-term employment opportunities for area residents. Local businesses would also benefit indirectly from spending by employees, residents, and their visitors. New businesses could open in the area to support the users of the Veterans Home. There would be long-term benefits to Veterans who would no longer

need to travel long distances to receive care from a facility dedicated to Veterans. Neither construction nor operation of the facility is expected to result in significant adverse effects to the socioeconomics of the area.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home within the project area, and it would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term. No changes to the socioeconomics of the area would occur, though it is likely that the project area would develop in a manner similar to the Proposed Action in the future.

3.11 Community Services

Community services include fire and police protection, emergency services, schools, recreational areas, and utilities such as water, sanitary, and storm sewer.

3.11.1 Affected Environment

The project area is in an area that has police and fire protection services, emergency and hospital services, nearby schools and religious facilities, and nearby recreational trails and parks. The project area is currently undeveloped so is not currently served by utilities, though they are located nearby.

3.11.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of the Veterans Home. The area would be served by the City of Preston police and fire department and residents would have access to the nearby hospitals, recreational areas, and schools. The fire department connection for the new building needs to be located within 150 feet of a fire hydrant. There is an existing fire hydrant on the east side of Overlook Drive, but it does not appear to be within 150 feet of the new building. Several new fire hydrants would be required around the perimeter of the new building.

The Proposed Action is not expected to have a significant adverse impact, or impose any additional requirements on, these community services.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home within the project area, and it would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term. No changes to the community services of the area would occur, though it is likely that the project area would develop in a manner similar to the Proposed Action in the future.

3.12 Solid and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous substances are defined as any solid, liquid, contained gaseous, or semi-solid waste, or any combination of wastes that pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and the environment. Hazardous substances are primarily generated by industries, hospitals, research facilities, and the government. Improper management and disposal of hazardous substances can lead to pollution of groundwater or other drinking water supplies, and the contamination of surface water and soil. The primary Federal regulations for the management and disposal of hazardous substances are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA; 42 USC sections 6901 et seq.). The MPCA is responsible for administering the CERCLA and RCRA in Minnesota. The MPCA also administers rules governing above- and below-ground petroleum storage tanks and solid wastes.

3.12.1 Affected Environment

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed at the project area in January 2019. No Recognized Environmental Conditions were identified on or adjacent to the project area as identified by 40 CFR Part 312 and ASM E1527-13 (**Appendix B**). No buildings exist in the project area.

3.12.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

During construction of the Proposed Action, construction activities would result in the potential for short-term adverse impacts due to the presence and use of petroleum and hazardous waste products. Proper handling and storage of these substances would minimize the risk of spills. The SWPPP would outline the requirements for minimizing spill risk. Solid waste reduction would also be prioritized during construction, with at least 75% of nonhazardous construction and demolition waste diverted from a landfill. Construction and waste materials do not include land-clearing debris (including trees, rocks, and vegetation), excavated soils, and fill and base materials such as topsoil, sand, and gravel.

Operation of the Veterans Home will generate solid wastes, medical wastes, and small amounts of hazardous wastes typical of care facilities. Handling, storage, and disposal of these substances will be done in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. Adherence to these regulations would minimize the potential for spills or contamination. Therefore, neither construction or operation of the facility in the Proposed Action is expected to cause significant adverse impacts with regard to solid or hazardous materials.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home within the project area, and it would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term. No impacts related to solid or hazardous wastes would occur, though it is likely that the project area would develop in a manner similar to the Proposed Action in the future.

3.13 Transportation and Parking

Transportation and parking address the roadway network and physical structures that move a population throughout a specific area. The availability of transportation infrastructure and its capacity to support growth are generally regarded as essential to an area's economic growth.

3.13.1 Affected Environment

The project area is currently undeveloped and used for agricultural cropland surrounded by woodland. Adjacent roadways include State Hwy 16 to the north, Golfview Drive to the west, Windmill Road to Overlook Drive to the south, and US Hwy 52 to the east. No formal access exists to the site and no parking is available within the site. No formal traffic studies have been performed in the area.

3.13.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

Construction of the Proposed Action would create additional traffic to the area during both the construction and operation phases of the project. During construction, short-term impacts from construction employees accessing the site would occur but are not expected to adversely impact the transportation network.

During operation, the facility would gain access from the intersection of Windmill Road and Overlook Drive to the south of the project site. The project design incorporates 75 parking stalls for residents, employees, and visitors. A portion of Windmill Road would need to be removed and replaced for connection of new utilities. A right-of-way permit and coordination with the City regarding reconstruction of this roadway will be required. The project is not expected to adversely impact the transportation network.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home within the project area, and it would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term. No impacts related to transportation or parking would occur, though it is likely that the project area would develop in a manner similar to the Proposed Action in the future.

3.14 Utilities

Utilities include municipal water, sanitary sewer, electricity, gas, stormwater, and telecommunication services.

3.14.1 Affected Environment

The project area is currently undeveloped so is not currently served by utilities, though they are located nearby. Several utilities, including gas, sanitary, and water currently exist within Windmill Road (**Figure 6**). Telecommunications in the city are provided through Mediacom Cable, MiBroadband, or CenturyLink.

3.14.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

Construction of the Proposed Action would require modifications to the utility network. Several utilities would be extended to the site and a portion of Windmill Road would need to be removed and replaced for connection of new utilities.

Gas

Gas would be extended from an existing gas main within Windmill Road.

Sanitary

Sanitary sewer would be extended from the existing infrastructure located in the center of Windmill Road to the various wings of the new building. It is anticipated that the new sanitary services from the project would be gravity fed to the existing manhole.

Water

An 8-inch watermain currently exists within Windmill Road and new water service would be extended from that location to the new facility. The fire department connection for the new building needs to be located within 150 feet of a fire hydrant. There is an existing fire hydrant on the east side of Overlook Drive, but it does not appear to be within 150 feet of the new building. Several new fire hydrants would be required around the perimeter of the new building.

Stormwater

New catch basins would be installed to capture runoff from the roofs and other impervious surfaces, which would then be routed to the newly constructed stormwater pond on the site.

The Proposed Action is not expected to have a significant adverse impact, or impose any additional requirements on, these utilities.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home within the project area, and it would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term. No impacts related to utilities would occur, though it is likely that the project area would develop in a manner similar to the Proposed Action in the future.

3.15 Environmental Justice

The goal of environmental justice from a Federal perspective is to ensure fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and economic situations with regard to the implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, and Federal policies and programs. EO 12898 Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations (and the February 11, 1994, Presidential Memorandum providing additional guidance for this EO) requires Federal agencies to develop strategies for protecting minority and low-income populations from disproportionate and adverse effects of Federal programs and activities. The EO is "intended to promote non-discrimination in Federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment."

3.15.1 Affected Environment

The existing site is located on 16.6 acres of agricultural cropland surrounded by woodland. The population of Preston as of the 2010 Census 1,325 Demographics of the project area include less than 2% persons of color, 65% low income, and 44% having less than a high school education.

3.15.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would involve construction of the Veterans Home. Some short-term, minor noise and visual impacts may occur during construction, but these are not expected to disproportionately impact environmental justice populations. During operations, the Veterans Home would likely provide a few long-term employment opportunities for area residents. There would be long-term benefits to Veterans who would no longer need to travel long distances to receive care from a facility dedicated to Veterans. Operation of the facility is not expected to disproportionately impact environmental justice populations.

No Action

The No Action alternative would not construct the Veterans Home within the project area, and it would remain in agricultural use for at least the short term. No impacts to environmental justice populations in the area would occur, though it is likely that the project area would develop in a manner similar to the Proposed Action in the future.

3.16 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative actions are actions which, when viewed with other proposed actions, have cumulatively significant impacts and should therefore be discussed in the same impact statement.

The Proposed Action is taking place within an area of Preston that is zoned for residential. Surrounding areas within the city limits are zoned residential, commercial, and industrial. No other developments are

currently proposed adjacent to the project area that would interact with the Proposed Action impacts to create cumulative impacts, but it is reasonable to assume that development would occur in the future since the surrounding vacant parcels are planned for conversion into residential, industrial, or commercial per the approved zoning. Potential actions that could contribute to cumulative impacts would primarily include construction in the areas surrounding the project and would likely result in cumulative effects on various resources. However, as described below, none of these cumulative effects are expected to be significant.

Aesthetics

The proposed Veterans Home resemble other single-story residential facilities in the area as opposed to commercial or institutional (e.g., hospital) facilities. Construction within the vacant parcels surrounding the site would result in short-term aesthetic impacts similar to the Proposed Action. Once constructed, the developed areas surrounding the project site would contribute to long-term visual impacts when compared to the existing aesthetics of the agricultural fields and wooded areas. However, the cumulative impacts from those developments when combined with the Proposed Action would be insignificant.

Land Use

The Proposed Action is allowed as a permitted conditional use under the zoning regulations for R2 – One and Two Family Residential. The planned land use of the surrounding area would not be impacted and no adverse cumulative impacts would occur.

Air Quality

The increase in air pollutant emissions associated with the Proposed Action construction and operations would result in negligible additions of air quality pollutants including greenhouse gas emissions at a local and regional scale. Therefore, significant impacts on air quality or climate change under the Proposed Action, when combined with other reasonably foreseeable actions, are not expected. Compliance with State and Federal permitting requirements would ensure cumulative air quality effects do not exceed the threshold of significance.

Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action would result in ground-disturbing activities and minor changes in the viewshed for above-ground historic properties. The MN SHPO has indicated that the Proposed Action will have no effect to historic properties and that the likelihood of intact archaeological sites is very low. Therefore, there would be no adverse impacts to cultural resources. If cultural resources are discovered during construction, work would be halted, and the MN SHPO would be consulted.

Geology and Soils

The Proposed Action will result in ground disturbance during construction. Other reasonably foreseeable future actions would also likely result in ground disturbance during construction and potentially adverse impacts from erosion. Adherence to the State and Federal regulations, including implementation of erosion control BMPs and erosion and sediment control plans, would ensure that no significant cumulative effects would occur.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would likely include grading and excavation which would expose soils to surface water runoff and could temporarily impact water quality. Potential impacts would be minimized by incorporating erosion and sediment control BMPs and implementing a SWPPP. Projects that disturbed more than 1 acre of soils, would require an NPDES permit. Increases in impervious surfaces would be required to meet the MPCA's rate control, water quality, and volume control requirements. Adherence to local, State, and Federal regulations would ensure that no significant cumulative effects would occur.

Wildlife and Habitat

The Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would change the environment within each project site from agricultural fields and wooded areas to developed areas. These developed areas would likely include impervious surfaces, vegetated areas, and water quality BMPs such as stormwater

ponds. Changes in habitat, noise, and light disturbances are likely to cause minor short- and long-term impacts to wildlife and habitat; however, cumulative impacts are not expected to be significant.

Noise

The Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would result in an increase in ambient noise. Temporary increases in noise levels would occur from the operation of heavy equipment (such as bulldozers, backhoes, etc.) and haul/dump/concrete trucks during construction. Construction activities would likely be spaced out over time, thus reducing the potential for short-term impacts from construction noise. Once developed, noise levels would be reduced when compared to construction noise. Sources of noise would include those caused by HVAC systems and normal maintenance of properties (e.g., mowing, snow removal, etc.). Noise levels would not be expected to exceed the state standards and therefore cumulative significant noise impacts are not expected.

Floodplains, Wetland, and Coastal Management Zones

The Proposed Action would not impact floodplains, wetlands, or coastal management zones because none exist in the area. Based on a review of desktop data for these resources, few occur in the undeveloped areas surrounding the Proposed Action. Adherence to state and federal regulations related to these resources would ensure that cumulative impacts would not be significant.

Socioeconomics

The Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would likely make a slight contribution to the local economy during construction through the possible use of local construction materials and supplies as well as use of local businesses by construction employees.

During operation, the Veterans Home would likely provide a few long-term employment opportunities for area residents and local businesses would also benefit indirectly from spending by employees, residents, and their visitors. This may provide minor beneficial cumulative impacts in the surrounding communities.

Community Services

The Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would be served by the City of Preston police and fire department and residents would have access to the nearby hospitals, recreational areas, and schools. Cumulative potential effects are not expected.

Solid and Hazardous Materials

Construction of the Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would result in the potential for short-term adverse impacts due to the presence and use of petroleum and hazardous waste products during construction. Proper handling and storage of these substances would minimize the risk of spills. Following development, the Veterans Home and reasonably foreseeable developments would generate wastes typical of industrial and commercial facilities and residential developments. Adherence to local, state, and federal regulations would minimize the potential for contamination and solid wastes would be managed through facilities available within the community. Therefore, significant adverse cumulative impacts are not expected.

Transportation and Parking

Construction of the Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would create additional traffic to the area, resulting in short-term impacts from construction employees accessing the development sites. Construction activities would likely be spaced out over time, thus reducing the potential for short-term impacts from construction traffic. Development of the Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would likely require expansion of the transportation networks in that area which would require coordination with the City and, if applicable, Fillmore County. No significant cumulative impacts are expected.

Utilities

The Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would require modifications to the utility network. Several utilities would require extension, which would require coordination with the City of

Preston and Preston Public Utilities. These extensions would occur as needed based on development, and cumulative potential effects are not expected.

Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action and reasonably foreseeable future actions would likely result in short-term, minor noise and visual impacts during construction, but these are not expected to disproportionately impact environmental justice populations. Construction of these projects may make a slight contribution to the local economy during construction through the possible use of local construction materials and supplies as well as use of local businesses by construction employees. No significant cumulative impacts are expected.

3.17 Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy

The MDVA and City of Preston have solicited input from various federal, state, and local entities with regard to the Proposed Action. None of the input has suggested opposition or the potential for substantial controversy. MDVA is publishing and distributing this Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period. Public comments will be considered and addressed in the Final EA.

4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

MDVA coordinated with the following agencies to request review and provide comments on the Proposed Action (agency coordination is provided in **Appendix B**).

State Agencies

MN State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

- Letter of No Adverse Effect

Federal Agencies

US Department of Veterans Affairs

- Approval of Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

US Department of Agriculture

- Farmland Protection Policy Act – Submittal of Form AD-1006

US Fish and Wildlife Service (automated reply from IPaC systems)

- Official Species List and Effect Determination

MDVA also provided information regarding the project on their public webpage at <https://mn.gov/mdva/homes/futurehomes/> and the *Post Bulletin* provided information on the project in a March 31, 2021 article.

The EA is available for public review online on the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs website at <https://mn.gov/mdva/homes/futurehomes/>. Comments may be submitted until the close of the 30-day public comment period on June 23, 2021 via email to ryan.allen@state.mn.us or by mailing them to:

Ryan Allen, Construction Project Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Administration
309 Administration Building
50 Sherburne Avenue
St Paul, MN 55155

This document is also available by request from:

Minnesota Department of Administration
Ryan Allen, Construction Project Coordinator
ryan.allen@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-201-2392

A hard copy of the EA is available at the following location:

Preston City Hall
210 Fillmore Street West
Preston, MN 55965

5 MITIGATION

The following Table provides a description of impacted resources and applicable mitigation measures.

Table 2: Summary of Impacted Resources and Mitigation Measures

Resource	Proposed Action	Mitigation Measure (if applicable)
Aesthetics	Temporary impacts during construction. No long-term adverse impact	N/A
Land Use	No adverse impact	N/A
Air Quality	Particulate emissions during construction are below the de minimis threshold level. Emissions would comply with all permit requirements and regulations. No significant adverse impact.	<p>During construction: construction vehicle BMPs such as using compressed natural gas and minimizing idling of vehicles.</p> <p>During operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use energy efficient building materials • Install energy star appliances and programable thermostats • Install smart irrigation, or no irrigation at all • Utilize the city's recycling program and compost site
Cultural Resources	No adverse impact.	If during construction cultural resources are discovered construction would halt and the SHPO and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe would be consulted.
Geology and Soils	<p>Temporary increase in potential for erosion during construction.</p> <p>No adverse impact.</p>	<p>During construction: Erosion control BMPs will be in place throughout construction.</p> <p>The project will require a NPDES permit.</p>
Hydrology and Water Quality	<p>During construction: Potential for construction runoff to impact surface water quality.</p> <p>During operation: Increase in impervious will increase runoff.</p> <p>No adverse impact.</p>	<p>During construction: Erosion control BMPs will be in place throughout construction.</p> <p>During operation: the projects increased impervious will be required to meet the MPCA's rate control, water quality, and volume control requirements.</p> <p>The project will require a NPDES permit.</p>
Wildlife and Habitat	Construction may result in some displacement. No adverse impact to listed species.	Tree removal will be limited to August 1 – May 31 to avoid impacts to the northern long-eared bat.

Noise	<p>During construction: temporary increase in noise is expected.</p> <p>During operation: Noise levels are not expected to exceed state thresholds. No adverse impact.</p>	<p>During construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction during normal business hours. • Equipment will meet local, state, and federal noise regulations. • Construction personnel will wear OSHA-compliant hearing protection.
Floodplains and Wetlands	No adverse impact.	N/A
Socioeconomics	<p>Possible short-term localized beneficial impact to employment during construction as well as a positive workforce development and employment opportunities following completion.</p> <p>No adverse impact.</p>	N/A
Community Services	Beneficial impact by providing nursing care services for Veterans and their families.	N/A
Solid and Hazardous Waste	<p>Solid waste generated during construction and operation would be typical of similarly sized projects and residential facilities. Would comply with all regulations.</p> <p>No adverse impact.</p>	<p>The SWPPP will outline requirements for minimizing hazardous material spill risk during construction.</p> <p>Solid waste reduction will be prioritized during construction, with at least 75% of nonhazardous construction and demolition waste diverted from a landfill.</p> <p>Handling, storage, and disposal of solid waste will be done in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.</p>
Transportation and Parking	<p>During construction: short-term impacts from construction access.</p> <p>During operation: Access will be provided from William Drive. 124 parking stalls will be constructed. Traffic generation expected to be minimal.</p> <p>No adverse impact.</p>	A right-of-way permit will be required for work within the right-of-way for William Drive and CR 15 (if any).
Utilities	No adverse impact.	N/A

Environmental Justice	No adverse impact.	N/A
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6 LIST OF PREPARERS

Minnesota Department of Administration
Minnesota Department of Administration Ryan Allen, Construction Project Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Mike Jandro, State Program Administrative Manager
Consultant Staff
WSB & Associates, Inc. Mary Newman, Senior Environmental Scientist

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8 LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BMP	best management practice
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CWA	Clean Water Act
dBA	A-weighted decibel
EA	environmental assessment
EIS	environmental impact statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	finding of no significant impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
MDVA	Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
MN DNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
SHPO	state historic preservation office
SIP	state implementation plan
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VOC	volatile organic compound
WOUS	Water of the United States


APPENDIX A

Figures

- Figure 1 – Project Location
- Figure 2 – Proposed Action Layout
- Figure 3 – Zoning
- Figure 4 – Areas of Prime Farmland
- Figure 5 – Water Resources
- Figure 6 – Sanitary Service Areas



 Project Location
 City Boundary

N

0 2,000
Feet
1 inch = 2,000 feet

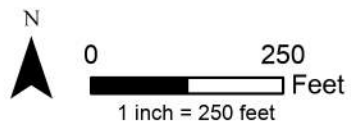
wsb



Figure 1: Project Location
Preston VA Home



Figure 2: Proposed Action Layout
Preston VA Home



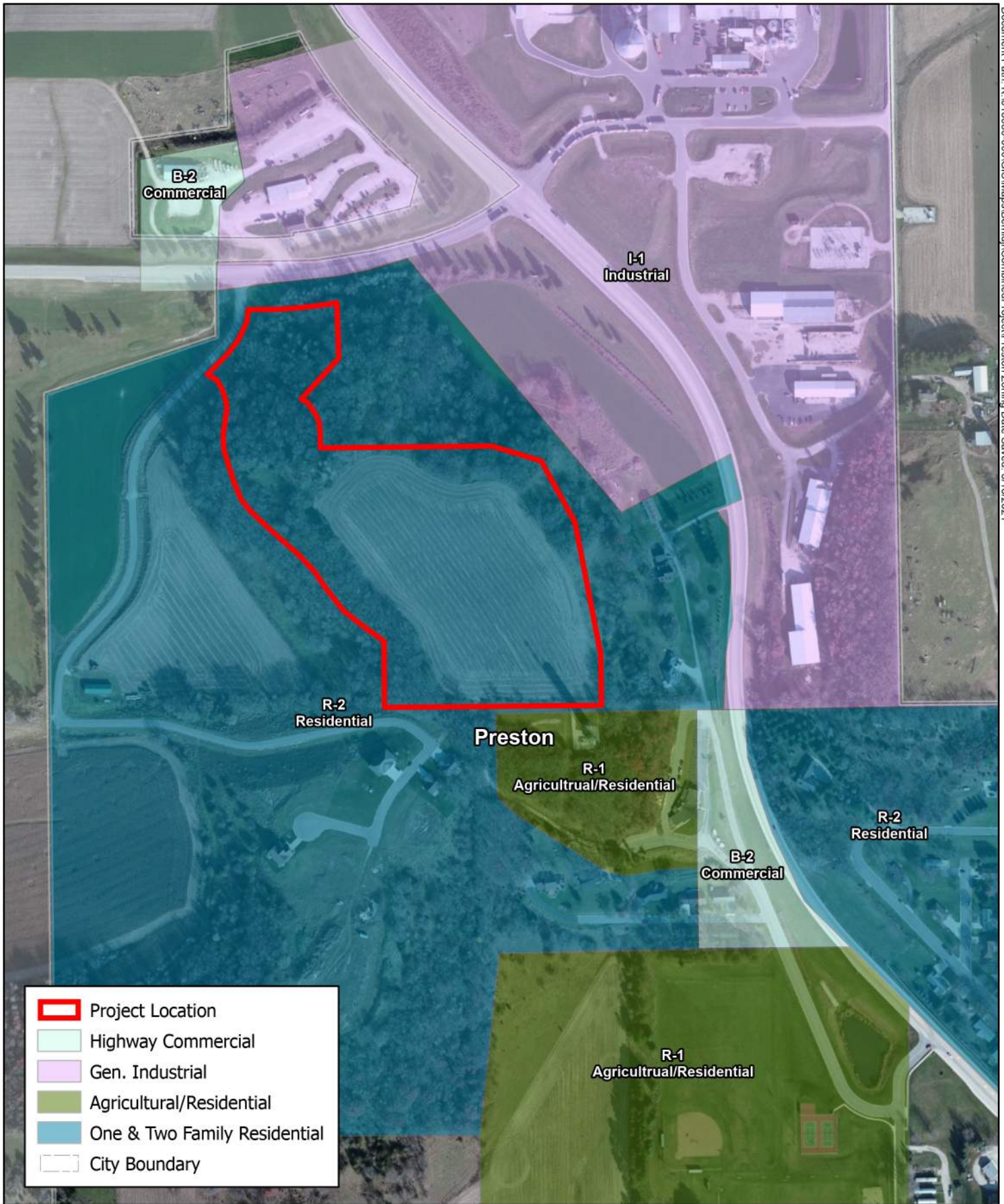


Figure 3: Land Use & Zoning
Preston VA Home



0 400
Feet
1 inch = 400 feet



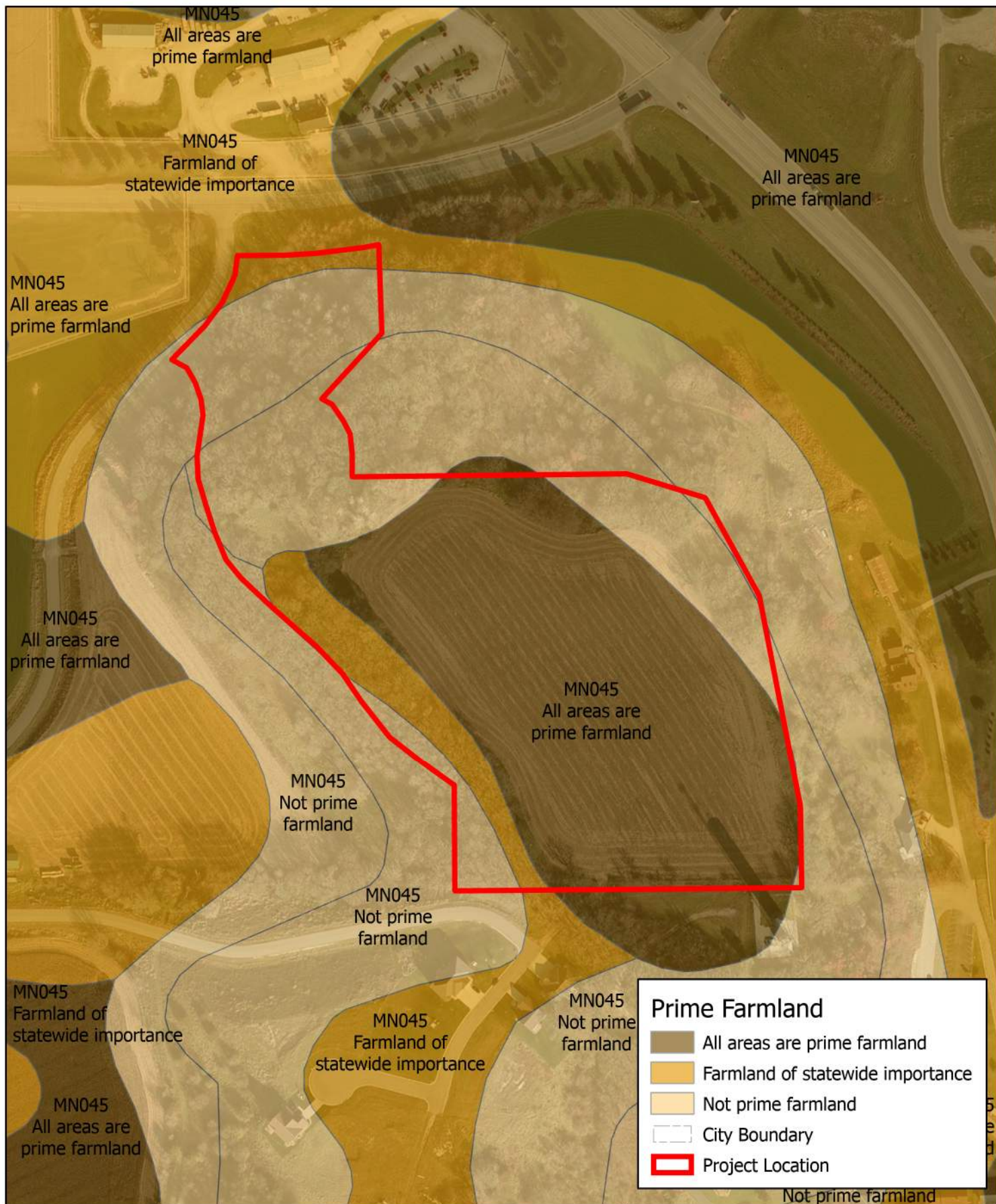
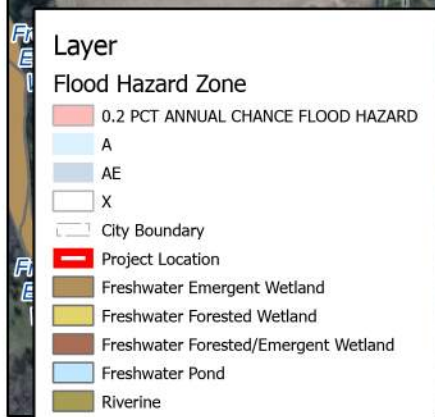


Figure 4: Areas of Prime Farmland
Preston VA Home



0 250
Feet
1 inch = 250 feet





N

0 725 Feet

1 inch = 725 feet

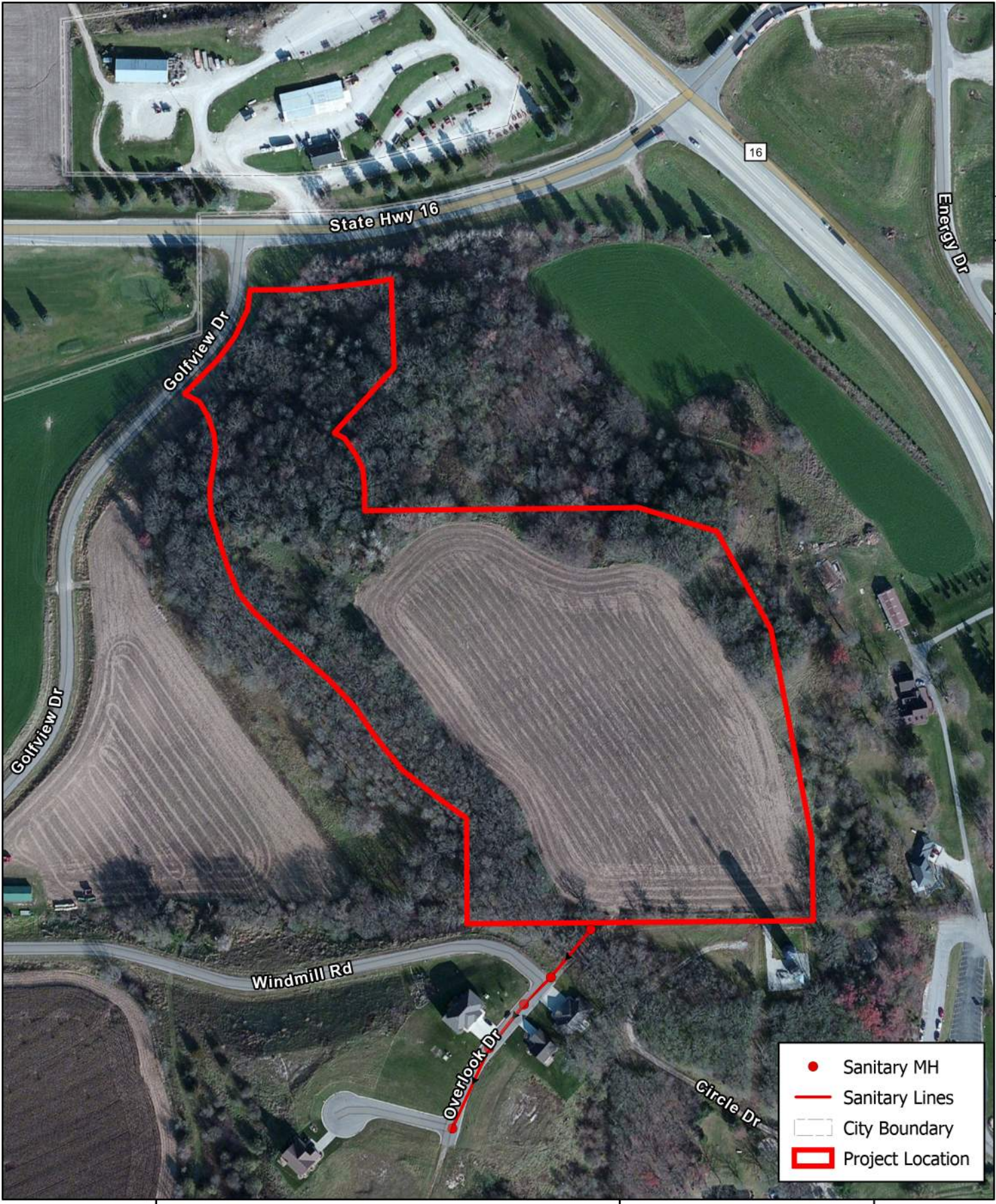
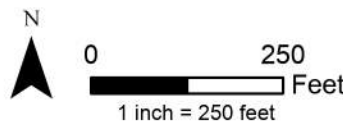


Figure 6: Sanitary Sewer Network Areas
Preston VA Home



APPENDIX B
Agency Correspondence

State Historic Preservation Office
Section 106



DEPARTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

August 15, 2019

Mr. Mike Jandro, Program Manager
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
20 West 12th Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: VA FAI # 27-053
Construction of a new 54 Bed Skilled Nursing Home (Preston Veterans Home)
710 Golfview Drive, T103 R11 S36 NE, Preston, Fillmore County
SHPO Number: 2019-1428

Dear Mr. Jandro:

Thank you for continuing consultation on the above project. Information received in our office on July 24, 2019 has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and implementing federal regulations at 36 CFR 800, and to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Office by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act (Minn. Stat. 138.665-666) and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act (Minn. Stat. 138.40).

As you are aware, we previously provided comments on this project in a letter dated May 20, 2019, recommending that a Phase I archaeological survey be completed prior to project construction. We have now received and reviewed the report titled *Phase I Archaeological Survey for the Proposed Preston Veterans Home, Preston, Fillmore County, Minnesota* (July 2019, Two Pines Resource Group). Based on the results of the investigations, we have determined that **no historic properties will be affected** by the project as currently proposed.

Implementation of the undertaking in accordance with this finding, as documented, fulfills your agency's responsibilities under Section 106. If the project is not constructed as proposed, including, but not limited to, a situation where design changes to the currently proposed project diverts substantially from what was presented at the time of this review, your agency will need to reopen Section 106 consultation with our office pursuant to 36 CFR 800.5(d)(1).

Please contact Kelly Gragg-Johnson, Environmental Review Specialist, at (651) 201-3285 or kelly.graggjohnson@state.mn.us if you have any questions regarding our review of this project.

Sincerely,

Sarah J. Beimers
Environmental Review Program Manager

cc via email: Anna Gaug, Program Manager, VA State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program

MINNESOTA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

50 Sherburne Avenue ■ Administration Building 203 ■ Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155 ■ 651-201-3287

mn.gov/admin/shpo/ ■ mnshpo@state.mn.us

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SERVICE PROVIDER

Natural Resource Conservation Service
Farmland Protection Policy Act



May 14th, 2021

Alison Harwood, CMWP
Director of Natural Resources
701 Xenia Ave. Ste. 300
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Re: MN045 VA home

Dear Ms. Harwood,

The purpose of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) as you are aware is to minimize the extent that federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of prime and important farmland to non-agricultural uses. The FPPA requires federal agencies involved in projects that may convert farmland to determine whether the proposed conversion is consistent with the FPPA. The FPPA is only a part of the EIS and NEPA process and compliance with the FPPA process does not guarantee compliance with other laws.

Upon reviewing the area of this project, I found that there is Prime Farmland in the proposed project area and does not meet any exemptions. Please see the attached AD-1006.

If you have any questions, please contact me via e-mail or at the above number.

Daniel Nath, CPSS# 446666, MN PSS# 57667
Resource Soil Scientist USDA/NRCS
Rochester, MN

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Date Of Land Evaluation Request			
Name of Project		Federal Agency Involved			
Proposed Land Use		County and State			
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		Date Request Received By NRCS		Person Completing Form:	
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Acres Irrigated	Average Farm Size
Major Crop(s)	Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: %		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: %		
Name of Land Evaluation System Used	Name of State or Local Site Assessment System		Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS		
PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Alternative Site Rating			
		Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly					
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly					
C. Total Acres In Site					
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information					
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland					
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland					
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted					
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value					
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)					
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (Criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)		Maximum Points	Site A	Site B	Site C
1. Area In Non-urban Use		(15)			
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use		(10)			
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed		(20)			
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government		(20)			
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area		(15)			
6. Distance To Urban Support Services		(15)			
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average		(10)			
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland		(10)			
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services		(5)			
10. On-Farm Investments		(20)			
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services		(10)			
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use		(10)			
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS		160			
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)		100			
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)		160			
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)		260			
Site Selected:	Date Of Selection	Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>			
Reason For Selection:					
Name of Federal agency representative completing this form:					Date:

(See Instructions on reverse side)

Form AD-1006 (03-02)

STEPS IN THE PROCESSING THE FARMLAND AND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FORM

- Step 1 - Federal agencies (or Federally funded projects) involved in proposed projects that may convert farmland, as defined in the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) to nonagricultural uses, will initially complete Parts I and III of the form. For Corridor type projects, the Federal agency shall use form NRCS-CPA-106 in place of form AD-1006. The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) process may also be accessed by visiting the FPPA website, <http://fppa.nrcs.usda.gov/lesa/>.
- Step 2 - Originator (Federal Agency) will send one original copy of the form together with appropriate scaled maps indicating location(s) of project site(s), to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) local Field Office or USDA Service Center and retain a copy for their files. (NRCS has offices in most counties in the U.S. The USDA Office Information Locator may be found at http://offices.usda.gov/scripts/ndISAPI.dll/oip_public/USA_map, or the offices can usually be found in the Phone Book under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture. A list of field offices is available from the NRCS State Conservationist and State Office in each State.)
- Step 3 - NRCS will, within 10 working days after receipt of the completed form, make a determination as to whether the site(s) of the proposed project contains prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland. (When a site visit or land evaluation system design is needed, NRCS will respond within 30 working days.
- Step 4 - For sites where farmland covered by the FPPA will be converted by the proposed project, NRCS will complete Parts II, IV and V of the form.
- Step 5 - NRCS will return the original copy of the form to the Federal agency involved in the project, and retain a file copy for NRCS records.
- Step 6 - The Federal agency involved in the proposed project will complete Parts VI and VII of the form and return the form with the final selected site to the servicing NRCS office.
- Step 7 - The Federal agency providing financial or technical assistance to the proposed project will make a determination as to whether the proposed conversion is consistent with the FPPA.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FORM

(For Federal Agency)

Part I: When completing the "County and State" questions, list all the local governments that are responsible for local land use controls where site(s) are to be evaluated.

Part III: When completing item B (Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly), include the following:

1. Acres not being directly converted but that would no longer be capable of being farmed after the conversion, because the conversion would restrict access to them or other major change in the ability to use the land for agriculture.
2. Acres planned to receive services from an infrastructure project as indicated in the project justification (e.g. highways, utilities planned build out capacity) that will cause a direct conversion.

Part VI: Do not complete Part VI using the standard format if a State or Local site assessment is used. With local and NRCS assistance, use the local Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA).

1. Assign the maximum points for each site assessment criterion as shown in § 658.5(b) of CFR. In cases of corridor-type project such as transportation, power line and flood control, criteria #5 and #6 will not apply and will, be weighted zero, however, criterion #8 will be weighed a maximum of 25 points and criterion #11 a maximum of 25 points.
2. Federal agencies may assign relative weights among the 12 site assessment criteria other than those shown on the FPPA rule after submitting individual agency FPPA policy for review and comment to NRCS. In all cases where other weights are assigned, relative adjustments must be made to maintain the maximum total points at 160. For project sites where the total points equal or exceed 160, consider alternative actions, as appropriate, that could reduce adverse impacts (e.g. Alternative Sites, Modifications or Mitigation).

Part VII: In computing the "Total Site Assessment Points" where a State or local site assessment is used and the total maximum number of points is other than 160, convert the site assessment points to a base of 160.

Example: if the Site Assessment maximum is 200 points, and the alternative Site "A" is rated 180 points:

$\frac{\text{Total points assigned Site A}}{\text{Maximum points possible}} = \frac{180}{200} \times 160 = 144 \text{ points for Site A}$

For assistance in completing this form or FPPA process, contact the local NRCS Field Office or USDA Service Center.

NRCS employees, consult the FPPA Manual and/or policy for additional instructions to complete the AD-1006 form.

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Section 7



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office
4101 American Blvd E
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665
Phone: (952) 252-0092 Fax: (952) 646-2873
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/section7/s7process/step1.html>



In Reply Refer To:

April 29, 2021

Consultation code: 03E19000-2021-TA-1368

Event Code: 03E19000-2021-E-04182

Project Name: Preston VA

Subject: Verification letter for the 'Preston VA' project under the January 5, 2016, Programmatic Biological Opinion on Final 4(d) Rule for the Northern Long-eared Bat and Activities Excepted from Take Prohibitions.

Dear Roxy Robertson:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received on April 29, 2021 your effects determination for the 'Preston VA' (the Action) using the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) key within the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system. This IPaC key assists users in determining whether a Federal action is consistent with the activities analyzed in the Service's January 5, 2016, Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO). The PBO addresses activities excepted from "take"^[1] prohibitions applicable to the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (87 Stat.884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Based upon your IPaC submission, the Action is consistent with activities analyzed in the PBO. The Action may affect the northern long-eared bat; however, any take that may occur as a result of the Action is not prohibited under the ESA Section 4(d) rule adopted for this species at 50 CFR §17.40(o). Unless the Service advises you within 30 days of the date of this letter that your IPaC-assisted determination was incorrect, this letter verifies that the PBO satisfies and concludes your responsibilities for this Action under ESA Section 7(a)(2) with respect to the northern long-eared bat.

Please report to our office any changes to the information about the Action that you submitted in IPaC, the results of any bat surveys conducted in the Action area, and any dead, injured, or sick northern long-eared bats that are found during Action implementation. If the Action is not completed within one year of the date of this letter, you must update and resubmit the information required in the IPaC key.

This IPaC-assisted determination allows you to rely on the PBO for compliance with ESA Section 7(a)(2) only for the northern long-eared bat. It **does not** apply to the following ESA-protected species that also may occur in the Action area:

- Leedy's Roseroot *Rhodiola integrifolia* ssp. *leedyi* Threatened

If the Action may affect other federally listed species besides the northern long-eared bat, a proposed species, and/or designated critical habitat, additional consultation between you and this Service office is required. If the Action may disturb bald or golden eagles, additional coordination with the Service under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act is recommended.

[1]Take means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct [ESA Section 3(19)].

Action Description

You provided to IPaC the following name and description for the subject Action.

1. Name

Preston VA

2. Description

The following description was provided for the project 'Preston VA':

Veteran's Affairs is proposing to construct veteran housing.

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@43.682302199999995,-92.094551077035,14z>

**Determination Key Result**

This Federal Action may affect the northern long-eared bat in a manner consistent with the description of activities addressed by the Service's PBO dated January 5, 2016. Any taking that may occur incidental to this Action is not prohibited under the final 4(d) rule at 50 CFR §17.40(o). Therefore, the PBO satisfies your responsibilities for this Action under ESA Section 7(a)(2) relative to the northern long-eared bat.

Determination Key Description: Northern Long-eared Bat 4(d) Rule

This key was last updated in IPaC on May 15, 2017. Keys are subject to periodic revision.

This key is intended for actions that may affect the threatened northern long-eared bat.

The purpose of the key for Federal actions is to assist determinations as to whether proposed actions are consistent with those analyzed in the Service's PBO dated January 5, 2016.

Federal actions that may cause prohibited take of northern long-eared bats, affect ESA-listed species other than the northern long-eared bat, or affect any designated critical habitat, require ESA Section 7(a)(2) consultation in addition to the use of this key. Federal actions that may

affect species proposed for listing or critical habitat proposed for designation may require a conference under ESA Section 7(a)(4).

Determination Key Result

This project may affect the threatened Northern long-eared bat; therefore, consultation with the Service pursuant to Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat.884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) is required. However, based on the information you provided, this project may rely on the Service's January 5, 2016, *Programmatic Biological Opinion on Final 4(d) Rule for the Northern Long-Eared Bat and Activities Excepted from Take Prohibitions* to fulfill its Section 7(a)(2) consultation obligation.

Qualification Interview

1. Is the action authorized, funded, or being carried out by a Federal agency?
Yes
2. Have you determined that the proposed action will have "no effect" on the northern long-eared bat? (If you are unsure select "No")
No
3. Will your activity purposefully **Take** northern long-eared bats?
No
4. [Semantic] Is the project action area located wholly outside the White-nose Syndrome Zone?
Automatically answered
No
5. Have you contacted the appropriate agency to determine if your project is near a known hibernaculum or maternity roost tree?

Location information for northern long-eared bat hibernacula is generally kept in state Natural Heritage Inventory databases – the availability of this data varies state-by-state. Many states provide online access to their data, either directly by providing maps or by providing the opportunity to make a data request. In some cases, to protect those resources, access to the information may be limited. A web page with links to state Natural Heritage Inventory databases and other sources of information on the locations of northern long-eared bat roost trees and hibernacula is available at www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/nhisites.html.

Yes

6. Will the action affect a cave or mine where northern long-eared bats are known to hibernate (i.e., hibernaculum) or could it alter the entrance or the environment (physical or other alteration) of a hibernaculum?
No
 7. Will the action involve Tree Removal?
No
-

Project Questionnaire

If the project includes forest conversion, report the appropriate acreages below. Otherwise, type '0' in questions 1-3.

1. Estimated total acres of forest conversion:

0

2. If known, estimated acres of forest conversion from April 1 to October 31

0

3. If known, estimated acres of forest conversion from June 1 to July 31

0

If the project includes timber harvest, report the appropriate acreages below. Otherwise, type '0' in questions 4-6.

4. Estimated total acres of timber harvest

0

5. If known, estimated acres of timber harvest from April 1 to October 31

0

6. If known, estimated acres of timber harvest from June 1 to July 31

0

If the project includes prescribed fire, report the appropriate acreages below. Otherwise, type '0' in questions 7-9.

7. Estimated total acres of prescribed fire

0

8. If known, estimated acres of prescribed fire from April 1 to October 31

0

9. If known, estimated acres of prescribed fire from June 1 to July 31

0

If the project includes new wind turbines, report the megawatts of wind capacity below. Otherwise, type '0' in question 10.

10. What is the estimated wind capacity (in megawatts) of the new turbine(s)?

0



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office
4101 American Blvd E
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665
Phone: (952) 252-0092 Fax: (952) 646-2873
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/section7/s7process/step1.html>



In Reply Refer To:
Consultation Code: 03E19000-2021-SLI-1368
Event Code: 03E19000-2021-E-04179
Project Name: Preston VA

April 29, 2021

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

This response has been generated by the Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) system to provide information on natural resources that could be affected by your project. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides this response under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543), the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668d), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*).

Threatened and Endangered Species

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirement for obtaining a Technical Assistance Letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation

for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

Consultation Technical Assistance

Please refer to the Midwest Region [S7 Technical Assistance](#) website for step-by-step instructions for making species determinations and for specific guidance on the following types of projects: projects in developed areas, HUD, CDBG, EDA, pipelines, buried utilities, telecommunications, and requests for a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) from FEMA.

Using the IPaC Official Species List to Make No Effect and May Affect Determinations for Listed Species

1. If IPaC returns a result of “There are no listed species found within the vicinity of the project,” then project proponents can conclude the proposed activities will have **no effect** on any federally listed species under Service jurisdiction. Concurrence from the Service is not required for **No Effect** determinations. No further consultation or coordination is required. Attach this letter to the dated IPaC species list report for your records. An example ["No Effect" document](#) also can be found on the S7 Technical Assistance website.
2. If IPaC returns one or more federally listed, proposed, or candidate species as potentially present in the action area of the proposed project – other than bats (see below) – then project proponents must determine if proposed activities will have **no effect** on or **may affect** those species. For assistance in determining if suitable habitat for listed, candidate, or proposed species occurs within your project area or if species may be affected by project activities, you can obtain [Life History Information for Listed and Candidate Species](#) through the S7 Technical Assistance website. If no impacts will occur to a species on the IPaC species list (e.g., there is no habitat present in the project area), the appropriate determination is **No Effect**. No further consultation or coordination is required. Attach this letter to the dated IPaC species list report for your records. An example ["No Effect" document](#) also can be found on the S7 Technical Assistance website.
3. Should you determine that project activities **may affect** any federally listed, please contact our office for further coordination. Letters with requests for consultation or correspondence about your project should include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header. Electronic submission is preferred.

Northern Long-Eared Bats

Northern long-eared bats occur throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin and the information below may help in determining if your project may affect these species.

This species hibernates in caves or mines only during the winter. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, the hibernation season is considered to be November 1 to March 31. During the active season (April 1 to October 31) they roost in forest and woodland habitats. Suitable summer habitat for northern long-eared bats consists of a wide variety of forested/wooded habitats where they roost, forage, and travel and may also include some adjacent and interspersed non-forested habitats such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, old fields and pastures. This includes forests and woodlots containing potential roosts (i.e., live trees and/or snags ≥ 3 inches dbh for northern long-eared bat that have exfoliating bark, cracks, crevices, and/or hollows), as well as linear features such as fencerows, riparian forests, and other wooded corridors. These wooded areas may be dense or loose aggregates of trees with variable amounts of canopy closure. Individual trees may be considered suitable habitat when they exhibit the characteristics of a potential roost tree and are located within 1,000 feet (305 meters) of forested/wooded habitat. Northern long-eared bats have also been observed roosting in human-made structures, such as buildings, barns, bridges, and bat houses; therefore, these structures should also be considered potential summer habitat and evaluated for use by bats. If your project will impact caves or mines or will involve clearing forest or woodland habitat containing suitable roosting habitat, northern long-eared bats could be affected.

Examples of unsuitable habitat include:

- Individual trees that are greater than 1,000 feet from forested or wooded areas,
- Trees found in highly developed urban areas (e.g., street trees, downtown areas),
- A pure stand of less than 3-inch dbh trees that are not mixed with larger trees, and
- A stand of eastern red cedar shrubby vegetation with no potential roost trees.

If IPaC returns a result that northern long-eared bats are potentially present in the action area of the proposed project, project proponents can conclude the proposed activities **may affect** this species **IF** one or more of the following activities are proposed:

- Clearing or disturbing suitable roosting habitat, as defined above, at any time of year,
 - Any activity in or near the entrance to a cave or mine,
 - Mining, deep excavation, or underground work within 0.25 miles of a cave or mine,
 - Construction of one or more wind turbines, or
-

- Demolition or reconstruction of human-made structures that are known to be used by bats based on observations of roosting bats, bats emerging at dusk, or guano deposits or stains.

If none of the above activities are proposed, project proponents can conclude the proposed activities will have **no effect** on the northern long-eared bat. Concurrence from the Service is not required for **No Effect** determinations. No further consultation or coordination is required. Attach this letter to the dated IPaC species list report for your records. An example ["No Effect" document](#) also can be found on the S7 Technical Assistance website.

If any of the above activities are proposed, please use the northern long-eared bat determination key in IPaC. This tool streamlines consultation under the 2016 rangewide programmatic biological opinion for the 4(d) rule. The key helps to determine if prohibited take might occur and, if not, will generate an automated verification letter. No further review by us is necessary. Please visit the links below for additional information about "may affect" determinations for the northern long-eared bat.

[NLEB Section 7 consultation](#)

[Key to the NLEB 4\(d\) rule for federal actions that may affect](#)

[Instructions for the NLEB 4\(d\) assisted d-key](#)

[Maternity tree and hibernaculum locations by state](#)

Other Trust Resources and Activities

Bald and Golden Eagles - Although the bald eagle has been removed from the endangered species list, this species and the golden eagle are protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Should bald or golden eagles occur within or near the project area please contact our office for further coordination. For communication and wind energy projects, please refer to additional guidelines below.

Migratory Birds - The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Service. The Service has the responsibility under the MBTA to proactively prevent the mortality of migratory birds whenever possible and we encourage implementation of recommendations that minimize potential impacts to migratory birds. Such measures include clearing forested habitat outside the nesting season (generally March 1 to August 31) or conducting nest surveys prior to clearing to avoid injury to eggs or nestlings.

Communication Towers - Construction of new communications towers (including radio, television, cellular, and microwave) creates a potentially significant impact on migratory birds, especially some 350 species of night-migrating birds. However, the Service has developed [voluntary guidelines for minimizing impacts](#).

Transmission Lines - Migratory birds, especially large species with long wingspans, heavy bodies, and poor maneuverability can also collide with power lines. In addition, mortality can occur when birds, particularly hawks, eagles, kites, falcons, and owls, attempt to perch on uninsulated or unguarded power poles. To minimize these risks, please refer to [guidelines](#) developed by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee and the Service. Implementation of these measures is especially important along sections of lines adjacent to wetlands or other areas that support large numbers of raptors and migratory birds.

Wind Energy - To minimize impacts to migratory birds and bats, wind energy projects should follow the Service's [Wind Energy Guidelines](#). In addition, please refer to the Service's [Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance](#), which provides guidance for conserving bald and golden eagles in the course of siting, constructing, and operating wind energy facilities.

State Department of Natural Resources Coordination

While it is not required for your Federal section 7 consultation, please note that additional state endangered or threatened species may also have the potential to be impacted. Please contact the Minnesota or Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for information on state listed species that may be present in your proposed project area.

Minnesota

[Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Endangered Resources Review Homepage](#)

Email: Review.NHIS@state.mn.us

Wisconsin

[Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Endangered Resources Review Homepage](#)

Email: DNRERReview@wi.gov

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. Please feel free to contact our office with questions or for additional information.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List
- Migratory Birds

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office

4101 American Blvd E
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665
(952) 252-0092

Project Summary

Consultation Code: 03E19000-2021-SLI-1368

Event Code: 03E19000-2021-E-04179

Project Name: Preston VA

Project Type: Federal Grant / Loan Related

Project Description: Veteran's Affairs is proposing to construct veteran housing.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@43.682302199999995,-92.094551077035,14z>



Counties: Fillmore County, Minnesota

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 2 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries¹, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Threatened

Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
Leedy's Roseroot <i>Rhodiola integrifolia</i> ssp. <i>leedyi</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/285	Threatened

Critical habitats

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

Migratory Birds

Certain birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act¹ and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act².

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to migratory birds, eagles, and their habitats should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described [below](#).

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1. The [Migratory Birds Treaty Act](#) of 1918.
 2. The [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#) of 1940.
 3. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

The birds listed below are birds of particular concern either because they occur on the [USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern](#) (BCC) list or warrant special attention in your project location. To learn more about the levels of concern for birds on your list and how this list is generated, see the FAQ [below](#). This is not a list of every bird you may find in this location, nor a guarantee that every bird on this list will be found in your project area. To see exact locations of where birders and the general public have sighted birds in and around your project area, visit the [E-bird data mapping tool](#) (Tip: enter your location, desired date range and a species on your list). For projects that occur off the Atlantic Coast, additional maps and models detailing the relative occurrence and abundance of bird species on your list are available. Links to additional information about Atlantic Coast birds, and other important information about your migratory bird list, including how to properly interpret and use your migratory bird report, can be found [below](#).

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, click on the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY at the top of your list to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Dec 1 to Aug 31
Henslow's Sparrow <i>Ammodramus henslowii</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3941	Breeds May 1 to Aug 31

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9679	Breeds elsewhere
Red-headed Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds May 10 to Sep 10
Wood Thrush <i>Hylocichla mustelina</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds May 10 to Aug 31

Probability Of Presence Summary

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read and understand the FAQ "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

Each green bar represents the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during a particular week of the year. (A year is represented as 12 4-week months.) A taller bar indicates a higher probability of species presence. The survey effort (see below) can be used to establish a level of confidence in the presence score. One can have higher confidence in the presence score if the corresponding survey effort is also high.

How is the probability of presence score calculated? The calculation is done in three steps:

1. The probability of presence for each week is calculated as the number of survey events in the week where the species was detected divided by the total number of survey events for that week. For example, if in week 12 there were 20 survey events and the Spotted Towhee was found in 5 of them, the probability of presence of the Spotted Towhee in week 12 is 0.25.
2. To properly present the pattern of presence across the year, the relative probability of presence is calculated. This is the probability of presence divided by the maximum probability of presence across all weeks. For example, imagine the probability of presence in week 20 for the Spotted Towhee is 0.05, and that the probability of presence at week 12 (0.25) is the maximum of any week of the year. The relative probability of presence on week 12 is $0.25/0.25 = 1$; at week 20 it is $0.05/0.25 = 0.2$.
3. The relative probability of presence calculated in the previous step undergoes a statistical conversion so that all possible values fall between 0 and 10, inclusive. This is the probability of presence score.

Breeding Season (■)

Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

Survey Effort (|)

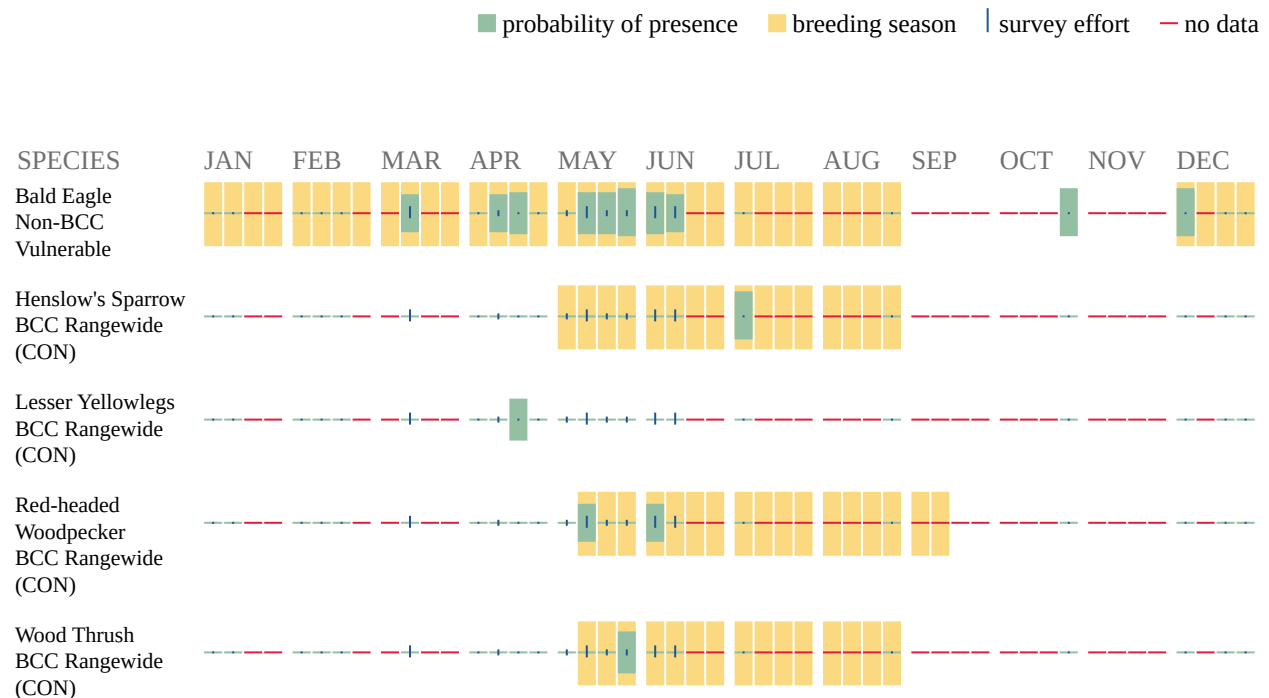
Vertical black lines superimposed on probability of presence bars indicate the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps. The number of surveys is expressed as a range, for example, 33 to 64 surveys.

No Data (—)

A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

Survey Timeframe

Surveys from only the last 10 years are used in order to ensure delivery of currently relevant information. The exception to this is areas off the Atlantic coast, where bird returns are based on all years of available data, since data in these areas is currently much more sparse.



Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Birds of Conservation Concern <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/birds-of-conservation-concern.php>
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/project-assessment-tools-and-guidance/conservation-measures.php>
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/nationwidestandardconservationmeasures.pdf>

Migratory Birds FAQ

Tell me more about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds.

[Nationwide Conservation Measures](#) describes measures that can help avoid and minimize impacts to all birds at any location year round. Implementation of these measures is particularly important when birds are most likely to occur in the project area. When birds may be breeding in the area, identifying the locations of any active nests and avoiding their destruction is a very helpful impact minimization measure. To see when birds are most likely to occur and be breeding in your project area, view the Probability of Presence Summary. [Additional measures](#) or [permits](#) may be advisable depending on the type of activity you are conducting and the type of infrastructure or bird species present on your project site.

What does IPaC use to generate the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?

The Migratory Bird Resource List is comprised of USFWS [Birds of Conservation Concern \(BCC\)](#) and other species that may warrant special attention in your project location.

The migratory bird list generated for your project is derived from data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#) and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle ([Eagle Act](#) requirements may apply), or a species that has a particular vulnerability to offshore activities or development.

Again, the Migratory Bird Resource list includes only a subset of birds that may occur in your project area. It is not representative of all birds that may occur in your project area. To get a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the [AKN Phenology Tool](#).

What does IPaC use to generate the probability of presence graphs for the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?

The probability of presence graphs associated with your migratory bird list are based on data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). This data is derived from a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#).

Probability of presence data is continuously being updated as new and better information becomes available. To learn more about how the probability of presence graphs are produced and how to interpret them, go the Probability of Presence Summary and then click on the "Tell me about these graphs" link.

How do I know if a bird is breeding, wintering, migrating or present year-round in my project area?

To see what part of a particular bird's range your project area falls within (i.e. breeding, wintering, migrating or year-round), you may refer to the following resources: [The Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds Bird Guide](#), or (if you are unsuccessful in locating the bird of interest there), the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology Neotropical Birds guide](#). If a bird on your migratory bird species list has a breeding season associated with it, if that bird does occur in your

project area, there may be nests present at some point within the timeframe specified. If "Breeds elsewhere" is indicated, then the bird likely does not breed in your project area.

What are the levels of concern for migratory birds?

Migratory birds delivered through IPaC fall into the following distinct categories of concern:

1. "BCC Rangewide" birds are [Birds of Conservation Concern](#) (BCC) that are of concern throughout their range anywhere within the USA (including Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands);
2. "BCC - BCR" birds are BCCs that are of concern only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA; and
3. "Non-BCC - Vulnerable" birds are not BCC species in your project area, but appear on your list either because of the [Eagle Act](#) requirements (for eagles) or (for non-eagles) potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities (e.g. offshore energy development or longline fishing).

Although it is important to try to avoid and minimize impacts to all birds, efforts should be made, in particular, to avoid and minimize impacts to the birds on this list, especially eagles and BCC species of rangewide concern. For more information on conservation measures you can implement to help avoid and minimize migratory bird impacts and requirements for eagles, please see the FAQs for these topics.

Details about birds that are potentially affected by offshore projects

For additional details about the relative occurrence and abundance of both individual bird species and groups of bird species within your project area off the Atlantic Coast, please visit the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#). The Portal also offers data and information about other taxa besides birds that may be helpful to you in your project review. Alternately, you may download the bird model results files underlying the portal maps through the [NOAA NCCOS Integrative Statistical Modeling and Predictive Mapping of Marine Bird Distributions and Abundance on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf](#) project webpage.

Bird tracking data can also provide additional details about occurrence and habitat use throughout the year, including migration. Models relying on survey data may not include this information. For additional information on marine bird tracking data, see the [Diving Bird Study](#) and the [nanotag studies](#) or contact [Caleb Spiegel](#) or [Pam Loring](#).

What if I have eagles on my list?

If your project has the potential to disturb or kill eagles, you may need to [obtain a permit](#) to avoid violating the Eagle Act should such impacts occur.

Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report

The migratory bird list generated is not a list of all birds in your project area, only a subset of birds of priority concern. To learn more about how your list is generated, and see options for identifying what other birds may be in your project area, please see the FAQ "What does IPaC use to generate the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location". Please be aware this report provides the "probability of presence" of birds within the 10 km grid cell(s) that overlap your project; not your exact project footprint. On the graphs provided, please also look carefully at the survey effort (indicated by the black vertical bar) and for the existence of the "no

data" indicator (a red horizontal bar). A high survey effort is the key component. If the survey effort is high, then the probability of presence score can be viewed as more dependable. In contrast, a low survey effort bar or no data bar means a lack of data and, therefore, a lack of certainty about presence of the species. This list is not perfect; it is simply a starting point for identifying what birds of concern have the potential to be in your project area, when they might be there, and if they might be breeding (which means nests might be present). The list helps you know what to look for to confirm presence, and helps guide you in knowing when to implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts from your project activities, should presence be confirmed. To learn more about conservation measures, visit the FAQ "Tell me about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds" at the bottom of your migratory bird trust resources page.

US Department of Veterans Affairs

Date: 9/18/2019
From: Christine Modovsky, Office of Construction & Facilities Management
To: **Office of Capital Asset Management Support, State Home Grant Program**
Subject: FAI 27-053
Construction: 54-bed facility
Preston, MN

B2A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

1. We have reviewed the state's submission identified above.

The project scope consists of constructing and operating a 54-bed, 68,000-square-foot State Veterans Home in Preston, MN. The 10-acre site currently consists of an agricultural field and some surrounding wooded area.

The Phase I environmental site assessment is acceptable. No recognized environmental conditions were identified.

2. Approval of the Phase I ESA is recommended.

Christine Modovsky
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